

SACRAMENTO, CALIF.
BEE

E - 180,556
S - 217,407
MAY 7 1976

Walters: CIA Work Vital, Abuses Few

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The Central Intelligence Agency's number two man vigorously defended CIA covert activities here Wednesday and charged that abuses by the agency have been "distorted" and "made to look like the rule rather than the exception."

In prepared remarks to a statewide gathering of Kiwanis Club members at the Senator Hotel, CIA Deputy Director Lt. Gen. Vernon A. Walters warned the audience against dismantling America's intelligence operations.

"We must not blind ourselves," he said. "The CIA and the FBI are not the real threats to American freedom and democracy... We face an enormous KGB (Soviet secret police) effort against the U.S."

The United States is facing a global enemy for the first time, Walters cautioned the audience, "and a credible intelligence capability is a necessary deterrent."

"We need an alternative between doing nothing and sending in the Marines."

Walters, who will be leaving his CIA post shortly, described the agency as a force for peace — not war.

"Without an effective intelligence gathering agency, there would be an arms race leading to a nuclear tinderbox," he said.

"Our duty," added Walters, "is not allowing the American people to be surprised by a nuclear Pearl Harbor."